149: Reinach--270 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
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GROUND NUTS. Only the subterranean varieties of ground nuts, or peanuts, are found in Laos. The inhabitants call this plant "Mak-Thoua-Dine," which means, literally, Fruit of the ground bean. Peanuts are not used for their oil, but are eaten boiled, roasted or with certain pastries in which they are incorporated. They are fed to convalescents as a tonic and restorative, doubtless because of their high nitrogen content.

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COCONUT AND SUGAR PALMS. The former is called "Kok-Mak-Phao" and its fruit is called "Mak-Phao." The second is called "Kok-Mak-Tane" and its fruit the "Mak-Tane." The sugar extracted from the "Mak-Tane" is called "Nam-Tane."

These two trees are cultivated almost everywhere in the environs of villages.

Coconuts are consumed on the spot, either fresh or dried. In the latter case their meat is used to make an edible oil which is quite good when newly made, or else it is shredded and then used to make a kind of sugar cream. Coconut meat is one of the constituents of carry.

The number of coconut palms in Laos is not great enough [368] to provide for local needs and still leave any over for export of their pulp, which is known commercially as copra. Sugar palms are used only for the needs of the local population. The sugar which they yield is whiter than cane sugar as extracted by the Laotians, and so the natives give the name of "Nam-Tane" to the crystallized European and Chinese sugar, because of its color, and never apply to it the name "Nam-Oi," which designates their black cane sugar.

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BETEL PALMS. Betel palms are grown wherever the altitude permits, and are even found at heights greater than eight hundred meters. [Illustration alongside text here] The betel palm, which is called "Kok-Mak," produces the "Mak" nut with the veined meat which enters into the composition of the national masticatory together with betel, lime, etc.

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When it reaches maturity the betel nut is picked and prepared in two different ways in order to be either consumed on the spot or transported to parts of the country which have none. There is even a small export trade, but so slight that we need only mention it.

It may be preserved whole after the floss envelope from which it is extracted has been dried, or else it may be cut up into [369] thin

incorporate into the teas which they send abroad. But they appeal to the Chinese and other Orientals, and part of the crop is even set aside and sent as tribute to the court of the Emperor in Peking. 245. [648]

The Shans, the Lus and the Youns use a masticatory called "Mieng" which is composed solely of tea leaves which have been preserved in brine. [276]

PIMENTOS. Since pimento is a much sought-after condiment, and one which is even indispensable to the people of Laos, as to those of neighboring countries, the cultivation of this product is quite widespread. [244 263]

This pimento is of the large, red variety. It is prepared by [378] drying and smoking it, thereby guaranteeing that it will keep. Its name in Laotian is "Mak-Phik." The price of dry pimento varies from 25 to 37 francs per hundred kilograms.

FARMING IMPLEMENTS AND TOOLS USED IN LAOS. We shall conclude this rapid listing of the chief crops grown in Laos by giving a list of the farming implements used in the country. These latter are just as primitive and just as rudimentary as the farming methods, and the Laotians do not make any more effort to improve the ones than to improve the others. 412 241

The plow (Thai). The plow is extremely simple and is the primitive swing-plow formed of a single piece of bent wood. A share or "Mak-Sob-Thai" is fitted to its front end. Sometimes the share is even supplanted by cutting the stick of wood diagonally and hardening it in a fire. Drawn by a buffalo, this tiny plow cannot break the soil to any great depth, and so is used in ricefields only when the soil has been sufficiently softened by the annual inundations.

The harrow (Khat). The harrow is a sort of wooden rake .9 meter long, the teeth of which are made of ironwood or any other very hard wood, "Mai-Lek" or "Mai-Khen-Hine." This rake forms one of the sides of a triangle, the peak of which is harnessed to a buffalo.

The roller (Ham). The roller is the trunk of some hardwood tree, "Mai-Khen-Hine" for example. It has pins over which two shafts fit, leaving space to harness a buffalo.

The sickle. There are sickles of several sizes, which are called either "Kio" or "Lek Kio" without distinction. Sickles are used to cut grasses and rice.